

Message Text

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22-11

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07

LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 USIA-06 SS-15 SP-02 NSC-05 /070 W

----- 112293

R 191435Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0893

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION BRUSSELS EC

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 5674

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB,ILO,NO,US

SUBJECT: SEIDMAN VISIT HIGHLIGHTS US ILO POSITION AND RE-
INFORCES CONTACTS BETWEEN AFL-CIO AND LO

REFS: (A) OSLO 5583 (NOTAL)

(B) OSLO 4408

(C) OSLO 5332

(D) OSLO 4099

SUMMARY: AFL-CIO SOCIAL SECURITY DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR
BERT SEIDMAN'S VISIT TO NORWAY TO PARTICIPATE IN
EMBASSY-USIS LABOR SEMINAR AND PROGRAMMING WAS
IMPORTANT IN TWO RESPECTS IN ADDITION TO THOSE OUTLINED
IN REFTTEL A. SEIDMAN VISIT REPRESENTED CONTINUATION
OF FREQUENT CONTACT AND DIALOGUE BETWEEN AFL-CIO
AND NORWEGIAN TRADE UNION FEDERATION(LO) DURING
1975, AFTER SEVERAL YEARS WITH LITTLE CONTACT(REF B)
SEIDMAN WAS ALSO PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE IN REITERATING
AND CLARIFYING AFL-CIO AND USG POSITION ON ILO,
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WHICH REINFORCED IMPACT OF EMBASSY'S EARLIER APPROACHES
(REF C). NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT,EMPLOYER AND LO

OFFICIALS CONCERNED WITH ILO ARE ALL INTERESTED IN COOPERATIVE ACTION TO IMPROVE ILO ALONG LINES PROPOSED IN SECRETARY KISSINGER'S LETTER TO ILO DIRGEN,BUT ARE AWAITING SPECIFIC US INITIATIVES OR SUGGESTIONS FOR COORDINATED ACTION. ACTION REQUESTED. EMBASSY REQUESTS DEPARTMENT'S GUIDANCE AS TO ANY SPECIFIC APPROACHES AND SUGGESTIONS EMBASSY SHOULD MAKE ON ILO QUESTION. END SUMMARY.

1. SEIDMAN VISIT CONTINUED LO-AFL-CIO DIALOGUE DURING DINNER DEC 4 WITH LO PRESIDENT TOR ASPENGREN, VICE PRESIDENT ODD HOJDAHL,INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY KAARE SANDEGREN,AMBASSADOR AND LABATT. AS WELL AS AT TWO LUNCHEONS WITH OTHER LO OFFICIALS. HOJDAHL AND SANDEGREN SPOKE WITH SATISFACTION ABOUT THEIR RECENT US VISIT AND TALKS WITH SECRETARY-TREASURER KIRKLAND,SEIDMAN AND OTHER AFL-CIO OFFICIALS. ASPENGREN MENTIONED HIS STRONG INTEREST IN VISITING AFL-CIO ONCE LO HAS WRAPPED UP SPRING WAGE NEGOTIATIONS. ASPENGREN SAID HE COULD TRAVEL ANYTIME AFTER APRIL 1. HOJDAHL EXPRESSED SOME SKEPTICISM THAT NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE FINISHED THAT SOON, BUT LABOR PRESS HAS SINCE ANNOUNCED THAT LO(AND THUS GOVERNMENT) WILL GO ALL OUT TO WRAP NEGOTIATIONS UP BY APRIL 1.

2. MUCH OF CONVERSATION FOCUSED ON ILO. SEIDMAN GAVE COMPLETE PRESENTATION AND EXPLANATION OF AFL-CIO AND USG POSITION ON ILO, CLARIFYING QUESTIONS ASPENGREN HAD.HOJDAHL AND SANDEGREN SEEMED WELL BRIEFED ALREADY,HAVING JUST VISITED AFL-CIO. ASPENGREN AND OTHERS EXPRESSED SATISFACTION THAT AFL-CIO AND USG MEANT TO PARTICIPATE FULLY DURING NEXT TWO YEARS AND HOPED TO AVOID LEAVING ILO. THEY AGREED WITH US CRITICISM OF ILO AND EXPRESSED INTEREST IN CONCRETE INITIATIVES US WOULD PROPOSE. SEIDMAN EXPLAINED THAT IT WAS TOO EARLY AFTER NOTIFICATION TO HAVE DECIDED ON NEXT STEP,BUT THAT US TRIPARTITE COMMITTEE WOULD MEET IN NEAR FUTURE TO DISCUSS STRATEGY AND EACH WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH ITS COUNTERPARTS IN
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FRIENDLY LANDS.

3. SANDEGREN POINTED OUT THAT HE HAD USED NOV 5-9 TRADE UNION EXCHANGE VISITS TO HUNGARY AND POLAND TO INSIST THAT EAST EUROPEANS COOPERATE IN CUTTING OUT POLITICIZATION AND OTHER MISUSE OF ILO. SANDEGREN OFFERED THIS AS DEMONSTRATION OF LO'S READINESS TO MOVE PROMPTLY AND USE EVERY AVENUE TO RESPOND TO AFL-CIO AND STRAIGHTEN OUT ILO. ASPENGREN AND HOJDAHL LOOKED ON IN EVIDENT APPROVAL OF SANDEGREN'S

INITIATIVE. SEIDMAN EXPRESSED AMERICAN SKEPTICISM.
HE REMARKED THAT COMMUNISTS' DEEDS COUNT, NOT THEIR WORDS.

COMMENT: PORTUGAL HAS MADE ASPENGREN MORE COOL AND
SKEPTICAL IN DEALING WITH EAST BLOC "UNIONS." NEVER-
THELESS, HE, SANDEGREN AND OTHERS IN LO PERSIST IN
TREATING COMMUNISTS AS IF THEY ACT IN
GOOD FAITH. NORWEGIANS PRESSURE COMMUNISTS TO LIVE
UP TO THIS TREATMENT, INSIST THAT "REALITY" AND "DETENTE"
DEMAND COOPERATIVE BEHAVIOR OF COMMUNISTS AND TRY TO
SHOW THAT EAST-WEST TRADE UNION CONTACTS CAN PRODUCE
POSITIVE RESULTS FOR THE WEST. NORWEGIAN INSISTENCE ON
HAMMERING AWAY AT COMMUNISTS ON PORTUGAL, TRYING TO
DRAW ON EAST-WEST CONTACT CAPITAL, HAS DRAWN ONLY
IRRITATION FROM COMMUNISTS, AND LED TO MARKED MUTUAL
COOLING OF NORWEGIAN TRADE UNION RELATIONS
WITH EAST BLOC DURING 1975 (REF D). LO PRESSURE
IS, OF COURSE, HIGHLY UNLIKELY TO AFFECT EAST BLOCK'S
ILO BEHAVIOR, BUT LACK OF RESPONSE MAY CHILL LO ATTITUDES
TOWARD EAST-WEST LABOR COOPERATION EVEN FURTHER.
ANOTHER FACTOR IS THAT ZEALOUS, AMBITIOUS AND ENERGETIC
SANDEGREN TENDS TO LEAP AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO EXER-
CISE OR ENHANCE HIS INFLUENCE.

4. SEIDMAN HELD SIMILAR CONVERSATION WITH SOCIAL AFFAIRS
MINISTER TOR HALVORSEN, A PROBABLE FUTURE LO PRESIDENT.
HALVORSEN ATTENDED LAST ILO CONFERENCE
AND HAS MAIN RESPONSIBILITY FOR ILO IN NORWEGIAN
GOVERNMENT. HE WAS CRITICAL OF WITHDRAWAL AS TACTIC BUT
AGREED WITH US CRITICISMS. HE WAS VERY INTERESTED IN
COOPERATING WITH US TO IMPROVE LO AND KEEP US IN
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"AN ORGANIZATION WHERE IT BELONGS." LIKE ASPENGREN,
ET AL, HALVORSEN EMPHASIZED THAT SPIRIT AND TONE
US PARTICIPATION CONTRIBUTES TO ILO IS EVEN MORE
IMPORTANT THAN US MONETARY CONTRIBUTION.

5. AN INTERVIEW WITH SEIDMAN CARRIED IN OSLO LABOR
DAILY ARBEIDERBLADET DEC 8 SET FORTH AFL-CIO AND USG
ILO POSITION EFFECTIVELY. INTERVIEW AND TRANSLATION
FOLLOW BY AIRGRAM.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: DEPARTMENTAL GUIDANCE IS
REQUESTED AS TO WHAT SPECIFIC ACTIONS US WOULD LIKE
NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT, WORKER AND EMPLOYER REPRESENTATIVES
IN ILO TO COOPERATE IN.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LABOR UNION OFFICIALS, VISITS, SEMINARS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 DEC 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975OSLO05674
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750443-0350
From: OSLO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751224/aaaaauni.tel
Line Count: 166
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 OSLO 5583
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <30 APR 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <02 OCT 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SEIDMAN VISIT HIGHLIGHTS US ILO POSITION AND RE- INFORCES CONTACTS BETWEEN AFL-CIO AND LO
TAGS: ELAB, OEXC, NO, US, ILO, AFL-CIO, LO, (SEIDMAN, BERT)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006